

HINDENBURG LINE (BELLICOURT)

On September 29th this division with the 27th American Division on the left and the 46th British Division on the right assaulted the Hindenburg Line. The Hindenburg Line at this point curves in front of the Tunnel St. Quentin. This was considered impregnable by the Germans for the following reasons: The Hindenburg Line curving west of the tunnel consisted of three main trench systems protected by vast fields of heavy barbed wire entanglements skillfully placed. This wire was very heavy and had been damaged very little by artillery fire. The dominating ground enabled them to bring devastating machine gun fire on all approaches. The lines had been strengthened with concrete machine gun emplacements. It contained at this point a large number of dugouts lined with mining timbers, with wooden steps leading down to a depth of about 30 feet, with small rooms capable of holding from four to six men each. In many cases these dugouts were wired for electric lights. The large tunnel through which the canal ran was of sufficient capacity to shelter a division. This tunnel was electrically lighted and filled with barges. Connecting it with the Hindenburg trench system were numerous tunnels. In one case a direct tunnel ran from the main tunnel to the basement of a large stone building, which the enemy used for headquarters. Other tunnels ran from the main tunnel eastward to the City of Bellicourt and other places. This complete subterranean system with its hidden exits and entrances, unknown to us, formed a most complete and safe subterranean method of communication and reinforcement for the German sector.

The 30th Division, the 60th Brigade augmented by units of the 117th Infantry, attacking, assaulted this line at 5:10 A.M., September 29th, on a front of three thousand yards, captured the entire Hindenburg System of that sector and advanced farther, capturing the tunnel system with the German troops therein and took the Cities of Bellicourt, Nauroy, Riqueval, Carriere, Etricourt,

Guillaine Ferme and Ferme de Riqueval, advancing four thousand two hundred yards, defeating two enemy divisions of average quality (the 75th Reserve Division and the 185th Division), taking as prisoners 47 officers and 1,434 men.

On October 1st-2nd the 30th Division was relieved by the 5th Australian Division and moved to back area with Division Headquarters at Herbecourt. The division scarcely reached this area when it was marched back and took over the front line in the same sector from the 2nd Australian Division near Montbrehain on the night of 4th-5th.

BRANCOURT, PREMONT, BUSIGNY,
ESCAUFOUT, VAUX ANDIGNY

On October 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th the 30th Division attacked each day, advancing 17,500 yards, and capturing le Tilleul d'Archies, le Petit Cambresis, Becquigny, Mon. Sarasin, le Trou Aux Soldats, Busigny, Gloriette, le Vert Donjon, Escaufout, le Rond Pont, Vaux Andigny, Vallee Hasard, la Haie Menneresse, la Rochelle, le Vent de Bise, St. Souplet, St. Benin, Malassise, Geneve, half of Montbrehain, Brancourt, Premont, Vaux le Pretre, Brancoucourt, Fraicourt Ferme, Bois Mirand, Butry Ferme, la Sabliere Bois, Becquignette Ferme, Bois de Malmaison, Malmaison Ferme, Bois de Busigny, Bois l'Ermitage, Bois Proyard, Imberfay and Du Guet Fassiaux Fermes, taking prisoner 45 officers and 1,889 men. The 59th Brigade began this attack on October 8th and captured all their objectives, including Premont and Brancourt. During this operation from October 8th to 11th the 30th Division encountered units from fourteen German divisions, classified by the British High Command as follows: 34th Division, average; 20th Division, very good; 24th Division, very good; 21st Division, average; 21st Reserve Division, average; 38th Division, very good; 119th Division, average; 121st Division, average; 187th Sharpshooting Section, very good; 204th Division, average; 208th Division, average; 3rd Naval Division, very good; 15th Reserve Division, average.